

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis, or thinning bones, makes your bones break easily. This condition is more common in women than in men. After women have gone through menopause, their bodies make less estrogen (a hormone that helps protect their bones). Their bones become more prone to breaking.

Half of all women past menopause will break a bone during their lives. A bone density test can help determine whether your bones are prone to breaking. If they are prone to breaking, your doctor may suggest that you take a medicine to reduce your risk for fractures.

Women who are 65 or older should be tested regularly. You should begin to be tested for osteoporosis at age 60 if you are at increased risk for fractures, for example, if you weigh less than 155 pounds.

You can reduce your risk for osteoporosis by:

- Doing weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, climbing stairs, jogging, yoga, and lifting weights.
- Getting 1,000 to 1,300 milligrams of calcium every day by eating the right foods (go to [Which Foods Are High in Calcium?](#)). A cup of milk or plain yogurt has 300 milligrams of calcium. You can also take calcium pills with vitamin D if you are not getting enough calcium in the food you eat.
- Not smoking.
- Taking medicines that can help prevent osteoporosis.

Which Foods Are High in Calcium?

- Foods in the milk group, such as milk and dishes made with milk, cheeses, and yogurt. (Choose lower fat, lower cholesterol foods, such as skim milk.)
- Canned fish with soft bones, such as sardines, anchovies, and salmon.
- Dark-green leafy vegetables, such as kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, and spinach.
- Tofu, if it is processed with calcium sulfate. Read the label to find out.
- Tortillas, if they are made from lime-processed corn. Read the label to find out.



Ask your doctor or nurse:

How can I get enough calcium?

Should I have a bone density test? If so, how often should I have this test?

What medicines can help prevent osteoporosis? Should I take them?

Reference Source: “The Pocket Guide to Good Health for Adults.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: May 2003.